

**NETWORKS, NETWORK PROCESSING DEVICES AND
THEIR METHODS OF OPERATION**

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ABSTRACT

A network-processor device comprises a packet-processor for an ingress port that is operative to distribute data flows to a plurality of equal-cost paths for transfer of data toward a given destination. The packet-processor also includes further distribution circuitry for designating a link of a link aggregation by which to channel
10 the data between routers within a part of a selected path. Accordingly, each of the layer distributions – i.e., amongst the higher-level equal-cost-paths and amongst the lower-level link aggregation – are capable of being coordinated by a common, generic packet-processor.

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